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AUTHOR Hacobian, Mossik
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ABSTRACT

This student booklet, one in a series of seven instructional materials dealing with the history and culture of Armenian Americans, guides junior high school students through the process of discovering information about the past. The materials may be presented in four sessions. Session I introduces students to the concept of historiography through a discussion of ancient Armenia. As an activity, students list information that future historians could learn by studying the U.S. penny. In Session II students examine photographs of Roman medallions which commemorate victories over the Armenians and answer questions pertaining to an illustration of an Armenian soldier of 163 A.D. In Session III students make deductions about the kingdom of Tigran II the Great (85 B.C.) by devising questions and answers about a photograph of an ancient coin. In the final session students read a brief history of Tigran II, examine a map of his kingdom superimposed on a map of Soviet Armenia, and write an essay describing the illustration on the booklet cover. The booklet may be used independently of the other materials in the series. (KC)

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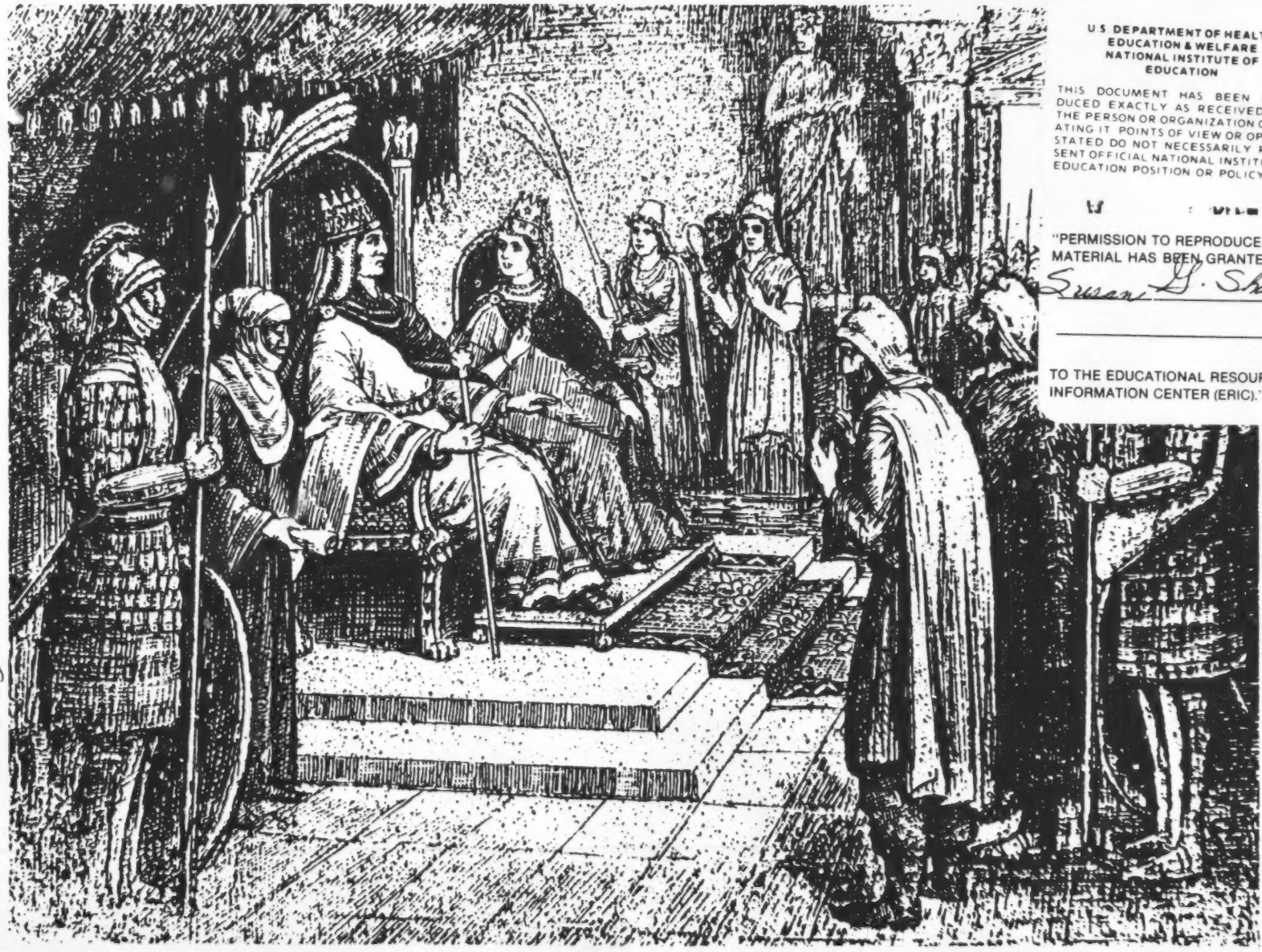

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# Discovering History Through Artifacts

## Case Study: Kingdom of Tigran II "The Great"

*MOSSIK HACOBIAN — A.R.S. Armenian Ethnic Heritage Project*

# TO PARENTS AND TEACHERS

This booklet is for children in grades 6 through 9. Its main purpose is to guide the young reader through the same process a historian must go through to discover information about the past. In the process, the "young historian" will also learn a little bit about Armenia's history.

## Worksheets

The worksheets on pages 4, 6 and 7-8 are the steps through which your child or student can become an investigator of history through artifacts. Once the process is understood it can be applied over and over in studying the recent or ancient history of any nation or culture.

The worksheets should also motivate the student to read the brief history of the Ardashesian Dynasty on page 9.

## Map of Tigran's Empire

You may use the information in the map on page 10 to draw the boundaries of Tigran's empire on a map of the Middle East or on a typographic map of Armenia, such as the one suggested in another publication of the A.R.S. Armenian Ethnic Heritage Project entitled *The Land of the Armenians.*

***(Continued on page 11)***

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212 Stuart Street,
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# MESSAGES FROM OUR ANCESTORS

Historians are very much like detectives. Their goal is to find out what happened; who did what, where and why. To find the true story about the past is often very difficult because our ancestors did not always leave behind evidence that we can easily understand. Today, there is so much written, recorded or filmed about our way of life and especially about major events that future generations will have little trouble finding out about us.

There is a great deal of information available to us about our recent history, particularly the last few hundred years. But as we go farther back in time it becomes more and more difficult to find out what happened.

For a nation like the Armenians, whose country has been ruled by Romans, Greeks, Assyrians, Persians, Arabs and Turks, some important sources of historical information are enemy accounts of their dealings with the Armenians. Armenia's conquerers sometimes commemorated their victories with boastful statements carved on stone tablets or with special medallions minted for the occasion. Their historians wrote detailed accounts of their conquests of Armenia. Some of these accounts and artifacts have survived and are available for study in museums and libraries in different parts of the world.

Folk tales, songs and myths are other important sources of information. Handed down from one generation to the next, some of them go back thousands of

**ANCIENT FARMERS**

*This photograph shows earthenware bowls of barley, wheat and millet. They were discovered during excavations of an ancient city in the outskirts of today's Yerevan, Armenia's capital. These grains are important clues about Armenia's ancient inhabitants. Discovery of large stocks of such grains along with remains of many types of fruits shows that these ancient people — citizens of the Urartu Empire — must have been good farmers and gardeners. The presence in Urartian ruins of numerous bones and skeletons of cows, bulls, sheep, goats and horses also indicates that Urartians were well advanced in cattle and sheep breeding.*

*This is an example of how a historian can learn about ancient people by studying the artifacts they left behind.*

years, and contain within them clues about our ancient past. Movses Khorenatzi (or Moses of Khorene), an Armenian historian living in the 8th century A.D., relied heavily on legends and myths in writing his history of Armenia dating back to about 1,000 B.C. Although there

are inaccuracies and exaggerations in his work, many of his accounts are confirmed by archeological discoveries.

In the two types of sources described above we are getting someone's interpretation of what happened or what life was like. Enemy accounts are often one-sided and exaggerated. Folk tales, on the other hand, have gone through so many changes with each telling over hundreds of years that the version we get, while full of interesting clues about an ancient person or event, is often different than the original folk tale.

Our ancestors have also left behind other types of evidence. These are in the form of buildings, roads, burial grounds, works of art, and *artifacts,* or objects such as household utensils, tools and weapons. These artifacts are the most extensive and informative evidence we have about the ancient past. Wherever people lived they left behind such objects. Most of their buildings crumbled with age, but beneath the rubble the artifacts remained sealed as if messages in time capsules left for us by our forefathers. All we have to do is to find them and study them very carefully so that we can understand the clues they contain.

To get a complete picture of what happened in antiquity we must study every source available to us: sources such as enemy accounts and folk tales, and evidence such as surviving buildings (or their ruins) and artifacts. In this booklet we will concentrate on the discovery of history through artifacts.

## THE ENEMY CAME AT NIGHT

*The kingdom of Urartu whose beginnings date back to around 1300 B.C. came to an end between 590 and 585 B.C. after a series of defeats by Babylon, Medea (Persia), and warlike nomadic tribes from Asia and the Caucasus. What was it like in those final days of the Urartu kingdom more than 2500 years ago? How did the end come?*

*For the Urartu city of Teishebaini, whose ruins were discovered in 1936 in the outskirts of Yerevan, the end came during the dark of the night. The invading nomads broke through the city's defenses at the citadel's side gate in the northwestern wall. The inhabitants were caught by surprise and abandoned their temporary residences in the courtyard at a moment's notice as the attack began.*

*How do historians and archeologists know all this? During the attack fire broke out and turned Teishbaini into ruins. The walls of the citadel collapsed and buried remains of dwellings and personal belongings everywhere in the citadel's courtyard. Thus, we conclude that the inhabitants were at rest, as on any normal night, instead of manning the defenses. The attack must have been at night because the citadel's position on a hilltop would have made a surprise daytime attack impossible.*

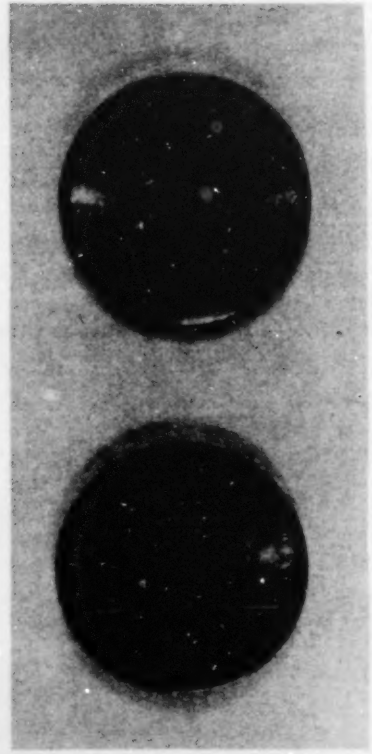
*The northwestern wall along the side gate was found to be full of enemy arrowheads (photo above). This shows not only the point of the enemy's entry, but the arrowheads themselves help identify the conquering nomads as Scythian and Transcaucasian tribes.*

# WHAT WILL THE PENNY TELL FUTURE HISTORIANS ABOUT THE AMERICAN CIVILIZATION? (WORKSHEET 1)

Let us begin with a familiar artifact — the U.S. penny!

One American historian has made a list of 15 things future historians can learn about the United States of the 20th century by just studying the U.S. Penny.

Working individually or in small groups, look at the two sides of the penny and in the space below make a list of what *you* think can be learned about the civilization it represents — what did the people know and/or believe in? When you finish, compare your list with the historian's list at the bottom of this page.



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

According to American historian Louis Gottschalk, a penny could tell future historians that American civilization knew about or believed in the following things or ideas: metallurgy, agriculture, dies (used in engraving), engraving, barbering, cloth and tailoring, English and Latin languages, Arabic numerals, a calendar, geography, religion, the idea of liberty, politics, arithmetic, and the decimal system.

# ARMENIAN HISTORY FROM ENEMY MEDALLIONS!

These two Roman medallions (163 A.D.) commemorate Roman victories over the Armenians. In ancient times, as now, such medallions were coined, not for circulation, but for special occasions such as victories, major historical events and religious holidays, and were given as gifts to selected persons. They were minted in fewer numbers than coins, were generally larger and could show individuals and events in greater detail. Many surviving Roman medallions deal with Armenia and are important sources of historical information.

*Medallions of Aurelius Verus Augustus (121-180 A.D.) with references to Armenia.*

This detailed sketch of a Roman medallion was made by Armenian historian Arakel Badrig. The scene represents "Defeated Armenia." The figure on the left is a Roman symbol of victory, and before it are two defeated Armenian soldiers, one lying down and one standing. Two shields, a sword, a bow and container of arrows, a hat and a uniform are hung from a special rack behind the soldiers.

All these details are not easy to see by looking at one coin or medallion. But an experienced historian, after examining many artifacts, is able to bring out such detail.

# MEET AN ARMENIAN SOLDIER FROM 163 A.D. (WORKSHEET 2)..

By studying Roman medallions like those shown on the previous page, Mr. Badrig has been able to make this sketch of an Armenian soldier of 163 A.D. This is our best substitute to sending a photographer 1800 years back in time to bring us an actual picture.

What can you say about the ancient Armenian soldier's outfit? Note: There are no set correct answers to the questions below. What is required is your interpretation of the details of the drawing.

1. What are his helmet and footwear made of? _____

   _____

2. Describe his weapons; what are they made of? _____

   _____

3. Does his uniform look like a difficult one to make? Why? _____

   _____

   _____

4. (For class discussion) Can you conclude what type of factories, warehouses, mines, etc. the Armenians must have had just to outfit their army?

5. Look at the cover photograph. How do you suppose historian Arakel Badrig gathered all those details together to be able to draw that picture?

6. Color the sketch.

# SILVER COIN OF TIGRAN "THE GREAT" (WORKSHEET 3).

You are now a novice historian. You are going back in time to the year 85 B.C. to learn about the kingdom of Tigran "The Great" by studying one of his coins. The coin contains clues or answers to many questions. It is your task as a historian to think of the right questions. Following the example of the questions on the next page, devise your own questions and examine the coin for answers.

Step 1 — List your questions and answers on another sheet of paper.

Step 2 — Combine the answers into an essay about Tigran and his kingdom.

The labeled photos below will help you understand the meaning of the images on the two sides of the coin. The coin is about the same size and weight as a U.S. 50-cent coin; it measures 2.8 centimeters, or 1 and 3/32 inches in diameter, and weighs 16 grams, or .56 ounces.

Inscription (Greek): ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΤΙΓΡΑΝΟΥ (BASILEOS TIGRANOU) meaning "King Tigran."

## Suggested Questions

1. Of the three cities of Tigranakert, Ardashad and Antioch which would you say was Tigran's capital at the time this coin was minted?
2. Did the Armenians of Tigran's kingdom have one god or many gods?
3. Which foreign culture influenced Tigran the most: Roman, Greek or Persian?
4. If Tigran worshipped in a pagan temple, to which celestial body would the temple most likely be dedicated?
5. How was Tigran's outfit similar to or different from the clothing of modern kings?

*(Suggested answers on page 11)*

# KING TIGRAN II "THE GREAT" OF THE ARDASHESIAN DYNASTY

Tigran was the fourth king of the Ardashesian Dynasty begun by his grandfather, Ardashes I, in 190 B.C. Before that, Armenia had been a part of the Greek empire created by Alexander "The Great."

From his capital city of Ardashad on the shores of the Arax River, Greek-educated Ardashes had consolidated all the territories of the area known as *Greater Armenia* stretching from the region around Lake Van and Lake Sevan and almost reaching the Caspian Sea. All the people in *Greater Armenia,* except the Greeks and Jews who had moved there, spoke the Armenian language. During the reign of Ardashes Armenia became a unified nation after about 400 years of development from a mixture of smaller tribes. Ardashes' grandson, Tigran, made Armenia into an empire because he ruled at a time when Armenia was strong and Rome was weak.

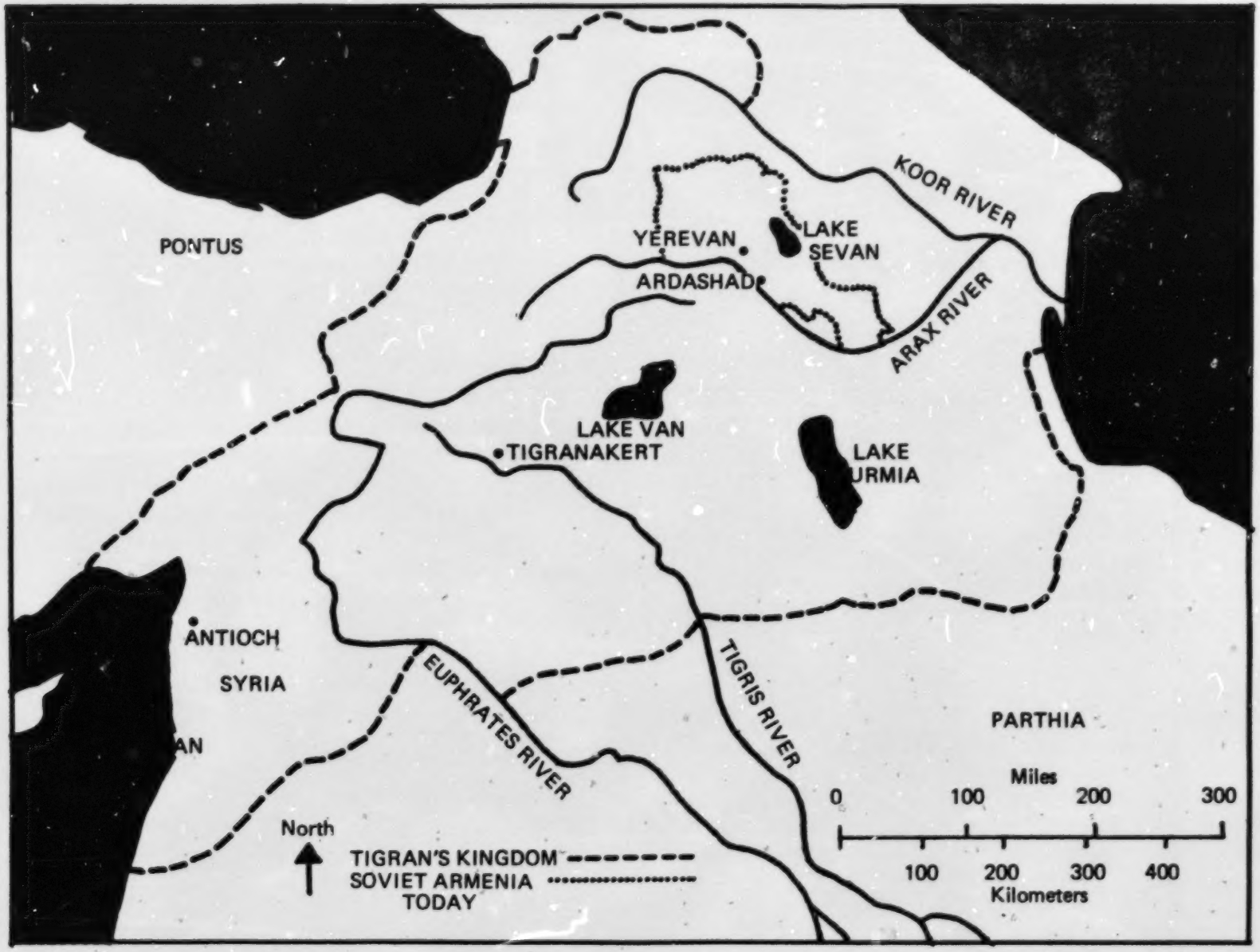
Tigran was born in 140 B.C. and took power in 95 B.C. He gained the alliance of his neighbor, King Mihrdad of Pontus, by marrying Mihrdad's daughter Cleopatra (not the Egyptian queen of the same name). By 83 B.C. Tigran had expanded Armenia's borders so that his empire reached the Black Sea in the north, the Mediterranean Sea in the southwest, and the Caspian Sea in the east.

During the early years of his reign, Tigran had used as his capital the cities of Ardashad in the east and Antioch in the west near the Mediterranean Sea. As his empire grew, Tigran decided he needed a more centrally situated capital and built the city of *Tigranakert* (meaning *built by Tigran*) on the shores of the Tigris River.

To populate the city, Tigran encouraged large numbers of Jews to migrate there from the southwestern portion of his empire. He also forced inhabitants of conquered and war-ruined cities to resettle in Tigranakert. One historian estimated the population of Tigranakert to be 300,000.

Many of the nations conquered by Tigran were culturally very advanced. The new nation of Armenia had not yet developed a strong culture of its own. To speed up Armenia's cultural development, Tigran brought many Greek, Jewish and Assyrian teachers, scientists, craftsmen, and military experts to Armenia. He increased trade and encouraged the arts. His palace became a center of art and literature. He established a theater after the Greek model and is generally regarded as the founder of Armenian theater.

However, Tigran's empire lasted only 14 years. By 69 B.C. Armenia's borders began to shrink. The Romans defeated Tigran's armies at Tigranakert and took away most of his territories. They allowed Tigran to rule over a smaller Armenia from his old capital of Ardashad and forced him to pay Rome a large tribute or tax of silver. Tigranakert was reduced to a small and unimportant town. The reign of Tigran, Armenia's most famous king, ended with his death in 55 B.C. at the age of 85.


PONTUS
YEREVAN
LAKE SEVAN
KOOR RIVER
ARDASHAD
ARAX RIVER
LAKE VAN
TIGRANAKERT
LAKE URMIA
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TIGRIS RIVER
PARTHIA
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0 100 200 300
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Kilometers
North
TIGRAN'S KINGDOM
SOVIET ARMENIA TODAY

10

## NOTE TO PARENTS AND TEACHERS (Continued from page 1)

In the classroom this booklet can best be used over four sessions in the following sequence:

Session 1. Classroom reading on pages 2-3 and worksheet 1 on page 4.
Session 2. Classroom reading on page 5 and worksheet 2 on page 6.
Session 3. Worksheet 3 on pages 7-8. Homework assignment: reading on page 9.
Session 4. Classroom essay describing the scene shown on the booklet cover. The student can imagine himself as a historian or reporter present at the royal gathering and describe the occasion for the gathering; its approximate date and location; the name of the king and queen and descriptions of those in attendance; and any other information the student can come up with using his imagination and the facts contained in the reading assignments.

## Answers to Questions on Page 8

Following are some possible answers to the questions posed on page 8. Students may be able to discover additional information on their own.

1. Antioch was Tigran's capital at the time. This conclusion is based on the presence on the coin of images of Antioch's goddess of fortune and the spirit of the city's Orontes River.

2. Armenians in Tigran's kingdom most likely worshipped many gods. The coin makes reference to a goddess of fortune, the spirit of a river, and the sun.

3. Tigran was most influenced by the Greeks as evidenced by the Greek inscription on the coin.

4. The prominence given the symbol of the sun on Tigran's crown suggests Tigran may have worshipped in a pagan temple dedicated to the sun.

5. Tigran wore a crown and cape as modern kings still do. His attire included a head and ear cover and earrings, neither of which is worn anymore by Middle Eastern or European male rulers.

# Armenian Ethnic Heritage Project

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DR. ROBERT MIRAK, *Director – Boston University*
VIGEN DER MANUELIAN, *Project Initiator and Coordinator – Newton Public Schools*
SETA KALIGIAN, *Chairman A.R.S. Ethnic Heritage Committee*
JUANITA WILL SOGHIKIAN, *Writer and Curriculum Developer – Curriculum Consultant, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University*
MOSSIK HACOBIAN, *Writer and Curriculum Developer*

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Children and teachers in the schools listed below participated in the trial teaching of some or all of the lessons in this booklet. Their efforts, questions and suggestions are gratefully appreciated.

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A.G.B.U. DAY SCHOOL, Watertown, Mass.
NERSES SHNORHALI ARMENIAN SCHOOL, Fairfield, Conn.
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ST. GREGORY ARMENIAN SCHOOL, North Andover, Mass.
ST. STEPHEN'S ARMENIAN SCHOOL, Watertown, Mass.
ST. VARTANANTZ ARMENIAN SCHOOL, Ridgefield, N.J.

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**PHOTO SOURCES:**

Cover–**Armenian Costumes**, by A. Badrig, Plate 8.
Page 2–**Karmir Blur**, by B. Piotrovsky, 4th color plate.
Page 3–**Urartian Art and Artifacts–A Chronological Study**, by Guitty Azarpay, Univ. of California Press 1968; Plate 8, page 127.
Page 5, top–**Roman Coins and Medallions Relating to Armenia**, by P.Z. Bedoukian, Plate 27 Figure 5 and Plate 29 Figure 18.
bottom–**Armenian Costumes**, by A. Badrig, Plate 6.
Pages 7, 8–**The Armenians**, by S. Der Nersessian, Plate 24,page 174.
Page 10, Map of Tigran's Kingdom–**Armenia: Cradle of Civilization**, by D.M. Lang, page 132.

# Materials Available From the Armenian Ethnic Heritage Project of the A.R.S.

1. **MY ORIGINS: Recording Family History**
   An introduction to the ideas of generations, family tree and plotting one's own family history and migration route to America. Includes worksheets and crossword puzzle review of basic concepts.

2. **LAND OF THE ARMENIANS**
   A study of Armenia's mountains, lakes, rivers and plateaus through the construction of a relief map. Includes worksheets and photographs.

3. **DISCOVERING HISTORY THROUGH ARTIFACTS: Kingdom of Tigran II "The Great"**
   How we can learn about earlier times by closely studying the artifacts people have left behind. Includes worksheets and photographs.

4. **ELEMENTS OF ARMENIAN CHURCH ARCHITECTURE**
   A study of Armenian church architecture through the construction of a model of a 7th century church. Includes worksheets and photographs.

5. **KHATCHKARS: Armenian Stone Crosses**
   Learning about a uniquely Armenian sculptural form by carving a plaster khatchkar (stone cross). Includes photographs.

6. **MEDIEVAL ARMENIAN COSTUMES**
   A study of Medieval Armenian history and its costumes. Includes figures and costumes to be colored and cut out.

7. **SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF ARMENIA**
   Learning about Armenia today by matching sounds on a cassette recording with sights pictured in a booklet about Soviet Armenia.

8. **THEY CAME FROM ARARAT**
   An 80-slide presentation and accompanying cassette with narration and music on the origins and development of the Armenian community in America.

**Note:** All Materials include specific project directions.